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Early Childhood Education in Resource-Constrained Environments: Play-Based Learning and Creative Pedagogies in a Cameroonian Kindergarten

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Abstract

Early childhood education (ECE) is crucial for cognitive development, yet kindergarten teachers in developing nations often operate with a severe shortage of commercial educational toys, digital tools, and structured learning materials. This presentation highlights innovative, low-cost, play-based pedagogical strategies implemented in a kindergarten classroom in Cameroon to foster foundational literacy, numeracy, and social-skills among young learners. To overcome resource scarcity, the curriculum was adapted by utilizing locally sourced, recycled, and natural materials (such as bottle caps, clay, and cardboard) to create handmade counting tools and sensory games. Additionally, traditional storytelling, local songs, and interactive movement games were integrated to stimulate language acquisition and emotional development in an inclusive environment. Over one school year, these creative methods led to a significant improvement in children's fine motor skills, a 30% increase in active vocabulary retention, and heightened daily attendance. This case study proves that high-quality, engaging early childhood education does not require expensive technology or imported materials. Instead, it relies on the strategic, creative adaptation of local resources by teachers. The findings provide a practical, scalable framework for kindergarten educators worldwide who operate in under-resourced schools, demonstrating how grassroots teaching initiatives can bridge educational gaps and ensure early learning equity.

Keywords: Cameroon; Early Childhood Education; Kindergarten; Play-Based Learning; Resource Scarcity